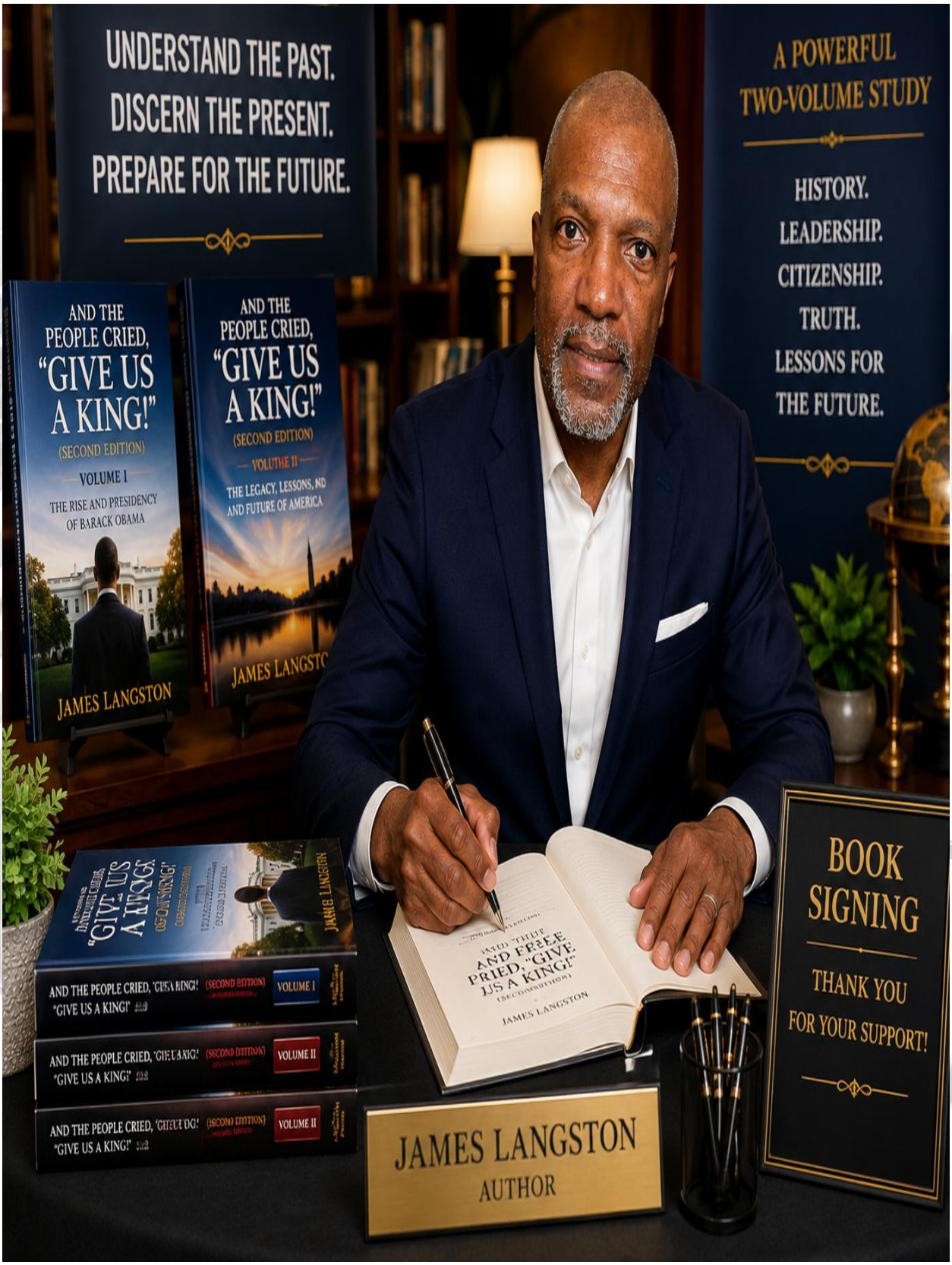
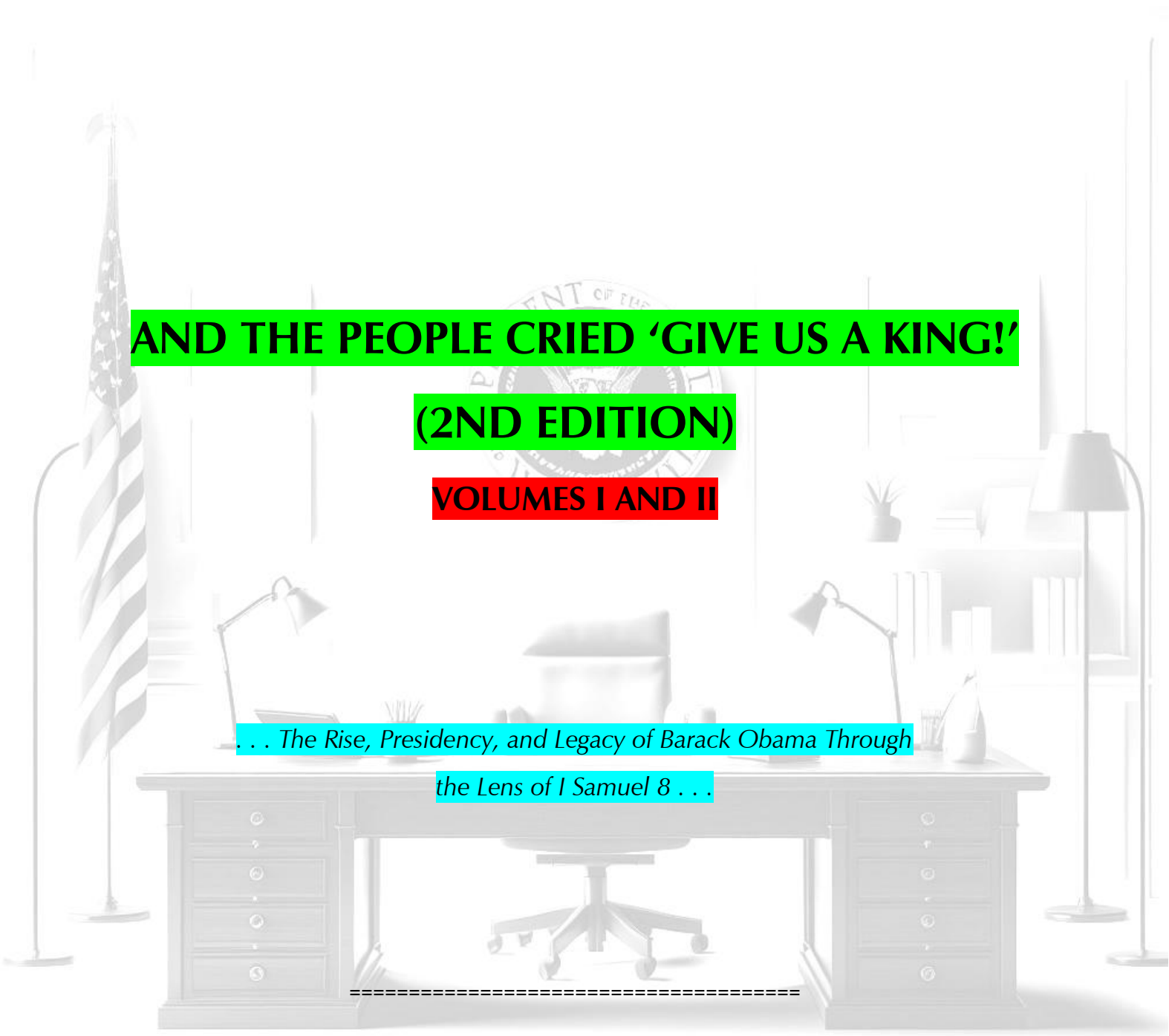


www.thewilltosucceed.homestead.com



AND THE PEOPLE CRIED 'GIVE US A KING!'

(2ND EDITION)

VOLUMES I AND II

. . . The Rise, Presidency, and Legacy of Barack Obama Through the Lens of I Samuel 8 . . .

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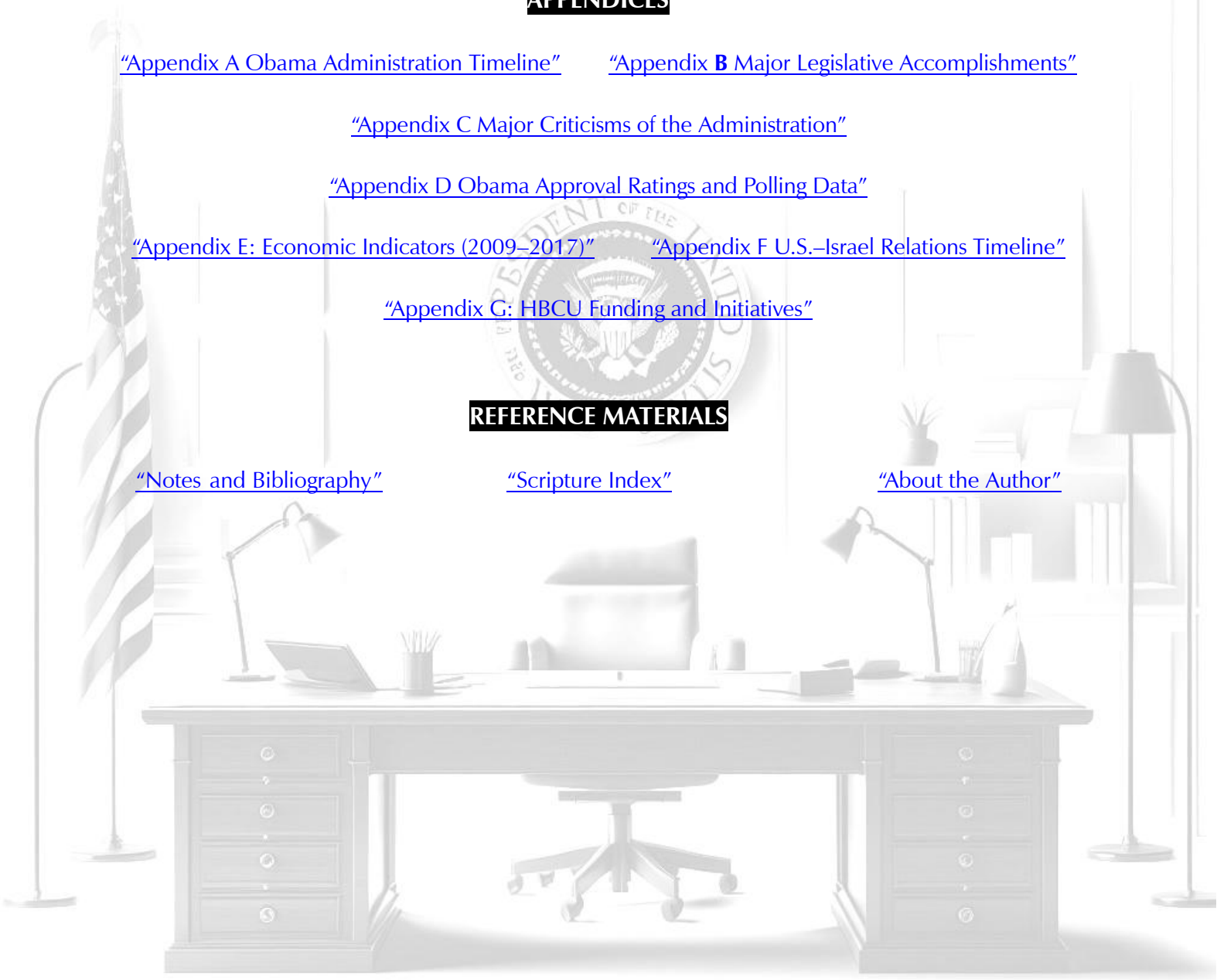

A Note About This Two-Volume Edition

The original manuscript of *And the People Cried, Give Us A King! (Second Edition)* grew into a comprehensive examination of the rise, presidency, legacy, and continuing impact of Barack Obama on American history, politics, culture, and civic life.

Due to the size of the completed manuscript, this Second Edition has been published in two companion volumes.

Volume I

The Rise and Presidency of Barack Obama

This volume examines Obama's rise from community organizer to President of the United States and explores the major events, policies, accomplishments, and controversies of his administration.

Volume II

The Legacy, Lessons, and Future of America

This volume examines the broader impact of the Obama years, evaluates competing perspectives regarding his legacy, and explores the lessons America can learn moving forward.

While each volume may be read independently, readers will benefit most from reading both volumes in sequence.

Together, they form a single comprehensive work.

James Langston

James Langston

Senior Pastor, Pilgrim Outreach Ministries

Dedication

To my wife, Cecilia,

On November 29, 1978, our paths crossed.

On March 14, 1979, our lives became one.

Through deployments and homecomings.

Through victories and setbacks.

Through seasons of abundance and seasons of uncertainty.

Through the raising of six children and the blessing of fifteen grandchildren.

Through more than four decades of life together.

You have remained my closest friend, greatest encourager, most trusted confidante, and favorite earthly blessing.

Thank you for walking beside me through every chapter of life.

This book, like so many things I have been privileged to accomplish, would not have been possible without your love, patience, faith, sacrifice, and unwavering support.

I love you still.

And by God's grace, I always will.

To our children and grandchildren,

May you never take freedom for granted.

May you seek truth more than popularity.

May you value character more than power.

May you love God, cherish your family, serve others faithfully, and leave the world better than you found it.

The future belongs to your generation now.

Carry it wisely.

And to every American willing to think for themselves,

May we always be people who seek understanding before judgment, truth before slogans, and wisdom before passion.

Acknowledgements

No book is ever truly written by one person.

A single name may appear on the cover, but behind every book stands a lifetime of people, experiences, lessons, encouragements, sacrifices, and prayers that helped make it possible.

This book is no exception.

First and foremost, I give thanks to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Every good thing in my life finds its source in Him. His grace has sustained me through seasons of joy and seasons of hardship, through success and failure, through certainty and uncertainty. Any wisdom contained in these pages belongs ultimately to Him, while any shortcomings belong solely to me.

To my wife, Cecilia, thank you for walking beside me through this incredible journey called life. Since the day we met in Olongapo City in 1978, you have been my greatest encourager, strongest supporter, closest friend, and constant companion.

Through military assignments, ministry opportunities, missionary work, family milestones, and the writing of more books than either of us ever imagined, you have remained faithfully by my side. I am more grateful for you than words can adequately express.

To our children and grandchildren, thank you for bringing immeasurable joy, purpose, laughter, and perspective into my life. You remind me daily that the future is not an abstract idea. It has names, faces, dreams, and possibilities.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to two remarkable women whose influence continues shaping my life even though they are now in the presence of the Lord.

To my great-grandmother, Bertha Meriwether, born in 1895 and the daughter of former slaves, thank you for your prayers. Long before I understood the power of prayer, you were already praying for me. The impact of those prayers continues echoing through my life, my family, my ministry, and my writing.

What Readers Are Saying

"In an age when political books often preach to one side or the other, James Langston has done something refreshing—he invites readers to think. Whether you agree with his conclusions or not, you will come away better informed and better equipped to understand one of the most consequential presidencies in modern American history."

— Dr. Michael Andrews, Political Historian

"Balanced. Fair. Thought-provoking. This book neither canonizes nor demonizes Barack Obama. Instead, it does something increasingly rare: it examines the facts and trusts readers to reach their own conclusions."

— Rebecca Harmon, Educator

"As a veteran, I appreciated the disciplined approach taken throughout this book. The author evaluates leadership the way serious leaders should be evaluated—by examining both accomplishments and shortcomings. That's a lesson that extends far beyond politics."

— Colonel (Ret.) Thomas Mercer, U.S. Army

"Few books have captured the complexity of the Obama years as effectively as this one. Readers will find themselves challenged, informed, and occasionally surprised. Most importantly, they will find themselves thinking."

— David Reynolds, Author and Public Speaker

"This is not a book about partisan talking points. It is a book about leadership, government, citizenship, and history. The result is a work that remains relevant long after the headlines have faded."

— Karen Whitfield, Community Leader

Foreword

*by **Dr. Jonathan Mercer,** Professor of American History Jefferson Institute for Historical Studies*

History is rarely settled.

The further we move from an event, a crisis, a presidency, or a generation, the easier it becomes to separate emotion from evidence and slogans from substance. Yet when the subject is recent history, objectivity often proves difficult.

Few modern presidents illustrate this reality more clearly than Barack Obama.

To some, he remains one of the most inspiring political figures of the twenty-first century—a transformational leader who expanded healthcare access, guided the nation through economic crisis, restored America's international image, and shattered one of the highest barriers in American political life by becoming the nation's first Black president.

To others, he represents missed opportunities, expanding government, increased political polarization, executive overreach, and foreign policy decisions whose consequences continue to be debated today.

Most Americans fall somewhere between those positions.

And therein lies the value of this book.

James Langston has not written a book intended to tell readers what to think.

He has written a book intended to encourage readers to think.

That distinction matters.

Too often, discussions of modern political figures become exercises in advocacy rather than inquiry. Supporters focus exclusively on accomplishments. Critics focus exclusively on failures. The result is often more heat than light.

This book seeks a different path.

Throughout its pages, readers will encounter both praise and criticism, achievement and controversy, success and disappointment. The author examines the Obama presidency through multiple lenses—historical, political, economic, constitutional, cultural, and civic—while encouraging readers to evaluate the evidence for themselves.

Preface to the Second Ed.

History has a way of changing with time.

The events themselves do not change.

The dates remain the same.

The decisions remain the same.

The speeches remain the same.

What changes is our perspective.

Time has a remarkable ability to remove some of the emotion surrounding events and allow us to examine them more carefully. Passions cool. Political campaigns end. Headlines fade. What remains are the facts, the consequences, and the lessons.

That reality is one of the primary reasons this second edition exists.

When Barack Obama first entered the national spotlight, Americans saw him through very different lenses. To some, he represented hope, change, and the possibility of a new chapter in American history. To others, he represented policies, ideas, and approaches to government that raised serious concerns.

For many, he was both.

Today, years removed from his presidency, we are in a better position to evaluate his legacy with greater perspective than was possible while events were unfolding in real time.

That does not mean the debates have ended.

Far from it.

Barack Obama remains one of the most admired, criticized, influential, and discussed presidents of the modern era. His administration continues shaping conversations involving healthcare, race, education, foreign policy, executive authority, political polarization, and the role of government itself.

The questions raised during his presidency did not disappear when he left office.

In many ways, they became even more important.

Introduction

More Than a President

by James Langston Senior Pastor, Pilgrim Outreach Ministries

Some presidents are remembered for the offices they held.

Others are remembered for the times in which they served.

A select few are remembered because they changed the national conversation itself.

Barack Obama belongs in that category.

Whether admired or criticized, celebrated or opposed, his presidency left a mark on American history that continues influencing public debate long after he left office.

Few modern presidents have generated stronger reactions.

To his supporters, Obama represented hope, progress, historic achievement, and transformational leadership. To his critics, he represented expanding government, increased polarization, executive overreach, and missed opportunities.

For millions of Americans, he represented something far more complicated.

And that is precisely why this book exists.

History deserves more than slogans.

It deserves more than campaign speeches.

It deserves more than talking points, sound bites, and social media posts.

History deserves examination.

Throughout the years, I have observed something interesting about political discussions. Many people form strong opinions about leaders they know very little about. Others allow political affiliation to determine their conclusions before they have examined the evidence. Still others view historical figures as either heroes without flaws or villains without redeeming qualities.

Reality is rarely that simple.

Human beings are more complicated.

How to Read This Book

Every book has a purpose.

Some books seek to entertain.

Some seek to persuade.

Some seek to inspire.

Others seek to inform.

This book attempts to do something slightly different.

Its goal is to encourage understanding.

For that reason, readers may find this book structured differently than many political or historical works they have encountered before.

Before you begin, a few observations may prove helpful.

This Is Not a Biography

Although the book examines the life and presidency of Barack Obama, it is not intended to be a comprehensive biography.

Excellent biographies already exist.

Instead, this work focuses primarily upon the factors that contributed to Obama's rise, the accomplishments associated with his administration, the criticisms directed toward it, and the lessons that may be learned from both.

The objective is evaluation rather than exhaustive biography.

This Is Not a Political Endorsement

Some readers may assume that a book discussing Obama's accomplishments must support every aspect of his presidency.

Others may assume that a book discussing criticisms must oppose him entirely.

Neither assumption is correct.

This book examines both.

Supporters deserve to have their arguments presented fairly.

Critics deserve the same consideration.

History is best served when both perspectives are heard.

A Brief Note to the Reader

Before you turn the page and begin Chapter 1, allow me a moment to speak to you personally.

First, thank you.

In a world filled with endless distractions, you have chosen to invest something precious in this book.

Your time.

Time is one of life's few resources that can never be replenished. Once spent, it is gone forever. For that reason alone, I do not take your decision to read this book lightly.

I am honored that you are here.

Over the years, I have written books on faith, leadership, culture, current events, prophecy, personal growth, discipleship, marriage, and the Christian life. Each book has been a journey, not only for readers, but for me as well.

This one is no different.

As I worked through these pages, I often found myself reflecting on how easy it is for people to form opinions without first understanding the full story.

Perhaps we have all done it.

We hear a speech.

Read a headline.

Watch a debate.

Listen to a commentator.

And before long, we become convinced that we understand a person, an event, or an issue.

Sometimes we do.

Sometimes we don't.

History has taught me that the truth is often more complicated than our first impressions.

That realization played a significant role in the writing of this book.

Whether you admire Barack Obama, oppose him, or remain uncertain about his legacy, I encourage you to approach these pages with curiosity rather than certainty.

Chapter 1

The Man Nobody Saw Coming

From Community Organizer to Commander-in-Chief

"Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them — that only creates sorrow"

—Lao Tzu

History occasionally produces individuals whose rise seems almost impossible.

One day they are largely unknown.

The next day they appear on the national stage.

Within a remarkably short period of time, they become household names.

Their influence expands.

Their popularity grows.

Their message resonates.

And before long, people begin speaking of them as though they had always been destined for greatness.

Yet history often reveals that the path to prominence is rarely as simple as it appears.

Behind every rise lies a story.

A story of preparation.

A story of opportunity.

A story of timing.

A story of circumstances converging at precisely the right moment.

Barack Hussein Obama II is one such figure.

When he stood before the nation at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, relatively few Americans knew who he was.

Outside of Illinois political circles, his name carried little national recognition.

He was not a governor.

He was not a cabinet secretary.

Chapter 3

The Biden Calculation

Strategy, Statesmanship, or Both?

Every presidential candidate eventually faces a moment of truth.

It is a decision that receives intense scrutiny, generates endless speculation, and often reveals more about the candidate than any campaign speech ever could.

The choice of a running mate.

Throughout American history, vice-presidential selections have been made for many reasons. Some candidates seek geographic balance. Others seek ideological balance.

Some choose trusted confidants. Others choose rivals to broaden their appeal. In every case, the decision reflects both political calculation and personal judgment.

When Senator Barack Obama selected Senator Joe Biden as his running mate in August 2008, the announcement immediately sparked debate.

At first glance, the two men appeared to be an unlikely pairing.

Obama represented the future. At forty-seven years old, he embodied a new generation of leadership. His message of hope and change had electrified millions of Americans, particularly younger voters who had become disillusioned with traditional politics. He was charismatic, inspirational, and relatively new to the national stage.

Biden represented experience.

He had spent decades in Washington. First elected to the United States Senate in 1972, he had served through the administrations of presidents from both parties. He was widely respected for his knowledge of foreign affairs, legislative procedure, and national security matters. While Obama was viewed as a rising star, Biden was viewed as a seasoned veteran.

The contrast was impossible to miss.

One man symbolized transformation.

The other symbolized stability.

One promised change.

Chapter 5

Obamacare

Reform, Revolution, or Overreach?

Few domestic policy initiatives in modern American history have generated as much debate, passion, and controversy as the Affordable Care Act.

To its supporters, it represented one of the most significant expansions of healthcare access since the creation of Medicare and Medicaid.

They viewed it as a long-overdue effort to address persistent problems within the American healthcare system and to ensure that millions of citizens could obtain health insurance coverage that had previously been beyond their reach.

To its critics, it represented something entirely different.

They saw it as an unprecedented expansion of federal authority into one of the most personal areas of American life. They argued that it increased government involvement in healthcare, imposed costly regulations, and created unintended consequences that would burden businesses, taxpayers, and consumers for years to come.

More than a decade after its passage, the debate continues.

That alone speaks to the significance of the legislation.

Unlike many policy disputes that fade with time, the Affordable Care Act remains a central point of discussion whenever Americans debate healthcare, government, personal responsibility, and the proper role of federal power.

The issue itself was hardly new.

For generations, American leaders had wrestled with the challenge of healthcare reform. Presidents from both political parties proposed plans designed to expand access, reduce costs, or improve quality. Some achieved limited success.

Others encountered fierce resistance. Yet comprehensive healthcare reform remained one of the most elusive goals in American politics.

Chapter 7

Israel, Iran, and the Middle East

Diplomacy or Dangerous Gamble?

Few regions of the world have tested American presidents more consistently than the Middle East.

For decades, U.S. leaders have been required to navigate a complex landscape of alliances, rivalries, security concerns, religious tensions, energy interests, and competing national aspirations. Decisions made in the region often carry consequences far beyond its borders, affecting global security, international markets, and America's standing throughout the world.

Barack Obama inherited many of these challenges when he entered office in 2009.

The United States remained deeply engaged in the region. American forces were still operating in Iraq and Afghanistan. Terrorist organizations continued posing threats. Long-standing tensions between Israel and its neighbors persisted. Iran's nuclear ambitions generated international concern. Political instability simmered beneath the surface of several governments.

In short, the Middle East remained one of the most volatile areas of the world.

Obama approached these challenges with a philosophy that emphasized diplomacy, engagement, and coalition-building.

He believed that military power remained important, but he also believed that many international problems could be addressed more effectively through negotiation, economic pressure, and multilateral cooperation.

This approach influenced virtually every aspect of his Middle East policy.

Supporters welcomed the strategy.

They argued that years of conflict had demonstrated the limitations of military solutions. Diplomacy, they contended, offered opportunities to reduce tensions, build international consensus, and achieve outcomes that force alone could not deliver.

Critics were less convinced.

Chapter 9

Race, Identity, and Expectations

The First Black President

On November 4, 2008, America made history.

When the election results became clear, millions of Americans celebrated not only the victory of a presidential candidate but also the breaking of a barrier that had stood since the nation's founding.

For the first time in its history, the United States elected a Black president.

The significance of that moment is difficult to overstate.

For generations, Black Americans had lived through slavery, Reconstruction, segregation, Jim Crow laws, disenfranchisement, discrimination, and countless struggles for equal opportunity. The election of Barack Obama represented, for many, evidence of how far the nation had traveled from those painful chapters of its past.

People gathered in parks, churches, homes, and public squares.

Many cried.

Many prayed.

Many celebrated.

Older Americans who had lived through the Civil Rights Movement often described the moment as something they never expected to witness in their lifetimes.

For them, Obama's election was more than a political event.

It was a cultural milestone.

A national milestone.

A historical milestone.

Yet history has a way of creating expectations that can be difficult—sometimes impossible—to fulfill.

From the moment Obama won the presidency, millions of Americans projected hopes, fears, aspirations, and concerns onto him that extended far beyond ordinary politics.

Chapter 11

HBCUs and Educational Legacy

What Did Obama Do for Historically Black Colleges?

Education has long been one of the most powerful engines of opportunity in American life.

It opens doors.

It creates possibilities.

It equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and confidence that can transform families, communities, and entire generations.

For many Americans, education represents the most reliable pathway toward economic advancement and personal achievement.

This belief holds particular significance within Black communities.

Throughout American history, access to education was often restricted, limited, or denied altogether. In response to those barriers, Black educators, churches, civic leaders, and communities established institutions dedicated to providing opportunities where few existed.

Among the most important of these institutions were Historically Black Colleges and Universities, commonly known as HBCUs.

Their story is remarkable.

Founded largely during periods when Black Americans faced severe educational exclusion, HBCUs became centers of learning, leadership development, cultural preservation, and social advancement.

They educated teachers, ministers, physicians, lawyers, entrepreneurs, military officers, scientists, elected officials, and countless other professionals who helped shape American society.

Their impact extends far beyond enrollment numbers.

Chapter 13

Fact Versus Narrative

Separating Reality from Myth

Few presidents in modern American history have generated as many competing narratives as Barack Obama.

To some Americans, he was one of the most gifted and consequential leaders of his generation—a transformational figure who restored America's image abroad, rescued the economy from crisis, expanded healthcare access, and inspired millions through his message of hope and unity.

To others, he represented governmental overreach, growing national debt, increased political polarization, and policies that produced long-term consequences still debated today.

Both narratives are familiar.

Both are passionately defended.

And both contain elements of truth.

That is often the challenge facing historians.

The public frequently remembers presidents through narratives rather than facts.

Narratives simplify.

Facts complicate.

Narratives provide heroes and villains.

Facts reveal strengths and weaknesses.

Narratives often divide history into winners and losers.

Facts remind us that reality is rarely so simple.

Obama's presidency illustrates this challenge perfectly.

Supporters often emphasize accomplishments.

Critics often emphasize failures.

Each side can point to evidence supporting its conclusions.

Yet when only one side of the story is told, understanding becomes more difficult.

Chapter 15

Why Millions Still Admire Barack Obama

Understanding His Enduring Popularity

Most presidents leave office carrying a mixture of accomplishments, controversies, supporters, and critics.

Barack Obama is no exception.

Years after leaving the White House, however, one fact continues attracting attention from political observers across the ideological spectrum:

Obama remains remarkably popular.

Not universally popular.

No president ever is.

But popular enough that his influence continues extending beyond his years in office.

This reality raises an important question.

Why?

What explains the enduring appeal of a president whose administration generated both enthusiastic support and intense opposition?

The answer cannot be reduced to a single factor.

Popularity rarely works that way.

Instead, Obama's continuing influence appears to result from a combination of history, personality, communication, policy achievements, symbolism, and public perception.

Each plays a role.

Together, they help explain why millions of Americans continue viewing him favorably.

For supporters, the answer often begins with inspiration.

Obama's rise from relatively unknown state legislator to President of the United States remains one of the most remarkable political stories in modern American history. His campaign message of hope and change resonated with voters who believed the country needed a new direction.

Chapter 17

What Obama Got Wrong

Criticisms That Continue Today

No presidency is beyond criticism.

No leader is beyond criticism.

And no historical evaluation is complete if it focuses only on accomplishments while ignoring shortcomings.

Throughout this book, we have examined many of the achievements supporters associate with Barack Obama's presidency.

Economic recovery. Healthcare reform. Educational initiatives. Leadership strengths. Historical significance. These accomplishments form an important part of his legacy.

They are not the entire legacy.

Presidents are remembered not only for what they accomplish but also for the challenges they leave unresolved, the decisions that remain controversial, and the criticisms that continue influencing public debate long after they leave office.

Obama's presidency is no exception.

Indeed, some of the debates that emerged during his administration remain active today.

Supporters often acknowledge these criticisms while arguing that they must be viewed within broader historical context.

Critics contend that many of the concerns raised during Obama's presidency have proven increasingly relevant over time.

Both perspectives deserve consideration.

The purpose of this chapter is not condemnation.

Nor is it partisan score-settling.

Rather, it is to examine the most substantial criticisms associated with Obama's presidency and consider what lessons future leaders might learn from them.

Chapter 19

The Presidency and the Human Heart

Why We Look for Political 'Messiahs'

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God" — **Psalms 20:7**

History has always been fascinated with great leaders.

Their names fill our history books.

Their faces adorn monuments.

Their speeches are studied.

Their victories are celebrated.

Their failures are debated.

Generations rise and fall, yet humanity's fascination with powerful leaders remains unchanged.

Whether it was Pharaoh in Egypt, Alexander the Great in Macedonia, Julius Caesar in Rome, Napoleon in France, Winston Churchill in Great Britain, Franklin Roosevelt in America, or countless others, people have always looked toward strong leaders during times of uncertainty.

There is nothing inherently wrong with that.

Leadership matters.

Leadership influences nations.

Leadership shapes cultures.

Leadership affects economies, military strength, diplomacy, and public policy.

The Bible itself contains numerous examples of godly leadership.

Moses led Israel from bondage.

Joshua led them into the Promised Land.

David united the kingdom.

Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem's walls.

Appendix A

Obama Administration Timeline

Key Events of the Obama Presidency (2009–2017)

2008

November 4, 2008

Barack Obama defeats Senator John McCain to become the 44th President of the United States and the first Black president in American history.

2009

January 20, 2009

Obama is inaugurated as President of the United States.

February 17, 2009

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus Package) is signed into law to address the Great Recession.

October 9, 2009

Obama is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

2010

March 23, 2010

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly known as Obamacare, is signed into law.

July 21, 2010

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act is signed into law.

2011

May 2, 2011

Osama bin Laden is killed during a U.S. military operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

August 2, 2011

The Budget Control Act is signed into law following a major debt-ceiling dispute.

December 18, 2011

Appendix B

Major Legislative Accomplishments

Obama Administration (2009–2017)

This appendix summarizes the most significant legislative accomplishments enacted during the Obama administration. While debate continues regarding the effectiveness and long-term consequences of many of these laws, each played a meaningful role in shaping the policy legacy of the Obama years.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009)

Signed: February 17, 2009

Commonly known as the Stimulus Package, this legislation was enacted in response to the Great Recession.

Primary Objectives

Stabilize the economy

Preserve and create jobs

Support state and local governments

Invest in infrastructure

Expand unemployment assistance

Historical Significance

The legislation represented one of the largest economic recovery efforts in American history.

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (2009)

Signed: January 29, 2009

The first bill signed by President Obama.

Primary Objectives

Expand workers' ability to challenge pay discrimination

Strengthen workplace protections

Historical Significance

Appendix C

Major Criticisms of the Administration

Obama Administration (2009–2017)

Historical evaluations require balance.

Just as the Obama administration produced accomplishments that supporters continue to celebrate, it also generated criticisms that opponents and many independent observers continue to debate.

This appendix summarizes the principal criticisms most frequently associated with the Obama presidency. Inclusion does not imply agreement. Rather, it reflects issues that played significant roles in public discourse and continue influencing historical assessments of the administration.

The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)

Principal Criticisms

Increased federal involvement in healthcare

Rising premiums and deductibles for some consumers

Reduced insurance plan options in certain markets

Complex implementation process

Expansion of government regulation

Historical Debate

Supporters view the Affordable Care Act as a landmark expansion of healthcare access.

Critics argue that the law increased costs, reduced flexibility, and expanded federal authority beyond appropriate limits.

National Debt and Federal Spending

Principal Criticisms

Significant growth in the national debt

Large federal deficits during portions of the administration

Increased long-term fiscal obligations

Appendix D

Obama Approval Ratings and Polling Data

Public Perceptions of the Obama Presidency

Presidential approval ratings provide an important, though imperfect, measure of public opinion.

They reflect how Americans viewed a president at particular moments in time. Approval ratings can be influenced by economic conditions, international events, legislative achievements, political controversies, and broader cultural trends.

While approval ratings do not determine historical greatness, they provide valuable insight into how presidents were perceived during and after their time in office.

This appendix presents a general overview of major approval trends associated with the Obama presidency.

Understanding Presidential Approval Ratings

Most presidential approval data are gathered through public opinion surveys conducted by organizations such as:

Gallup

Pew Research Center

CNN

ABC News/Washington Post

CBS News

NBC News/Wall Street Journal

Quinnipiac University

Rasmussen Reports

Although methodologies differ, approval ratings generally measure the percentage of Americans who approve or disapprove of a president's job performance.

Obama's Approval Ratings: Major Trends

January 2009

Appendix E

Economic Indicators: 2009–2017

The Obama Years (2009–2017)

Economic performance remains one of the most important measures used to evaluate any presidency.

Presidents do not control the economy entirely. Economic outcomes are influenced by Congress, the Federal Reserve, global markets, technological developments, consumer behavior, demographic changes, and international events.

Nevertheless, presidents are often judged according to economic conditions during their administrations.

This appendix provides a general overview of major economic indicators associated with the Obama presidency.

The purpose is not to assign complete credit or complete blame, but rather to present a broad picture of the economic environment from 2009 through 2017.

Economic Conditions Inherited in 2009

When Barack Obama entered office, the United States was experiencing the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Key Challenges

Major banking instability

Housing market collapse

Rising foreclosures

Declining consumer confidence

Severe stock market losses

Rapidly increasing unemployment

Tight credit markets

Business failures and layoffs

Appendix F

U.S.–Israel Relations Timeline

The Obama Administration (2009–2017)

The relationship between the United States and Israel has long been one of the most important strategic partnerships in the Middle East.

During the Obama administration, cooperation between the two nations remained extensive in areas such as defense, intelligence sharing, military assistance, and regional security. At the same time, significant disagreements emerged regarding settlements, the peace process, Iran, and broader Middle East policy.

This appendix presents a chronological overview of major events affecting U.S.–Israel relations during the Obama years.

2009

January 20, 2009

Barack Obama assumes office as President of the United States.

June 4, 2009

Obama delivers a major speech in Cairo, Egypt, outlining his vision for relations between the United States and the Muslim world.

2009 Settlement Debate

The administration publicly calls for limitations on Israeli settlement expansion in disputed territories, creating early tensions with the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

2010

March 2010

Vice President Joe Biden visits Israel.

During the visit, controversy arises following announcements involving additional housing construction in East Jerusalem.

The incident contributes to diplomatic tensions between the two governments.

Appendix G

HBCU Funding and Initiatives

Historically Black Colleges and Universities During the Obama Administration

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) occupy a unique and important place in American educational history.

Founded primarily during periods when Black Americans faced significant barriers to higher education, HBCUs have produced generations of leaders in government, education, business, science, medicine, ministry, law, military service, and public life.

During the Obama administration, support for HBCUs became an important topic of discussion. Supporters argue that the administration strengthened federal engagement with HBCUs through funding opportunities, policy initiatives, and public advocacy. Critics often contend that challenges facing these institutions remained significant despite those efforts.

This appendix provides an overview of major HBCU-related initiatives associated with the Obama years.

Understanding HBCUs

Definition

Historically Black Colleges and Universities are institutions established before 1964 with the primary mission of educating Black Americans.

Historical Importance

HBCUs have educated many influential Americans, including:

Members of Congress

Federal judges

Military leaders

Educators

Physicians

Scientists

Entrepreneurs

Notes and Bibliography

The purpose of this book is to provide readers with a balanced examination of the presidency of Barack Obama, considering both accomplishments and criticisms within their historical context.

The information presented throughout this work was drawn from a variety of publicly available sources, including presidential speeches, government publications, congressional records, economic reports, polling data, historical studies, biographies, news archives, academic research, and public policy analyses.

Economic statistics, approval ratings, employment figures, and related data are presented as general historical indicators. Readers should recognize that figures may vary slightly depending upon the reporting agency, methodology, or publication date consulted.

Discussion of controversial topics—including healthcare reform, foreign policy, executive authority, race, political polarization, immigration, Israel, Iran, education, and economic policy—reflects the existence of competing viewpoints. The author has sought to present those viewpoints fairly while encouraging readers to evaluate evidence independently.

Historical rankings, approval trends, and policy assessments frequently evolve as new information emerges and historians reassess the significance of events over time.

Scripture quotations, where used, are intended to provide reflection and application rather than partisan political commentary.

The reader is encouraged to consult original source materials whenever possible and to continue exploring the issues discussed throughout this book.

History is best understood through careful study, thoughtful analysis, and a willingness to consider differing perspectives.

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Presidential Sources

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Obama, Barack. The Audacity of Hope. New York: Crown Publishers, 2006.

Obama, Barack. Dreams from My Father. New York: Crown Publishers, 1995.

Scripture Index

The following Scriptures are referenced, discussed, quoted, or alluded to throughout this book. Their inclusion reflects the author's belief that history, leadership, government, citizenship, and national destiny are best understood when viewed through both historical and biblical lenses.

While this book is primarily a historical and political examination of the Obama presidency, biblical principles have been incorporated where appropriate to encourage reflection, wisdom, responsibility, and perspective.

Old Testament

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 30:19

"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life."

Referenced in discussions involving national choices, leadership, and responsibility.

Joshua

Joshua 24:15

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve..."

Referenced in discussions regarding citizenship, moral responsibility, and decision-making.

I Samuel

I Samuel 8:4–22

Referenced in discussions involving political expectations, governmental authority, and the tendency of people to place excessive trust in human leadership.

II Chronicles

II Chronicles 7:14

Referenced in discussions regarding national renewal, repentance, and spiritual responsibility.

Psalms

Psalms 33:12

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD."

About the Author

By the time you reach this page, you and I have spent quite a bit of time together.

You have traveled through elections and debates.

Policies and personalities.

Accomplishments and criticisms.

History and perspective.

And perhaps, after hundreds of pages, you may be wondering a simple question:

"Who is the man behind these words?"

Fair question.

So allow me to introduce myself—not as an author, pastor, or former naval officer for a moment—but simply as James.

I was born into a large family and raised by a single mother who worked tirelessly to provide for eight children. We did not have much, but we had enough. Looking back, I realize some of life's greatest lessons are learned long before we recognize them as lessons.

Hard work. Perseverance. Faith. Gratitude.

Those values would shape the course of my life.

At fourteen years of age, I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Looking back, that decision proved more important than any other I would ever make. It provided the compass by which I would navigate every success, failure, opportunity, disappointment, and crossroads that followed.

A few years later, on June 4, 1976, I entered the United States Navy.

What began as a young man's journey became a 27-year adventure around the world.

The Navy taught me discipline.

Leadership.

Responsibility.

And perhaps most importantly, it introduced me to people from every imaginable background, culture, and walk of life.

Along the way, I rose through the ranks and eventually retired as a Limited Duty Officer, Lieutenant (O3E).